

# LWF DOCUMENTATION

Edited by:  
Frances Maher, The Lutheran World Federation  
Department of Communication, Publication Office,  
150 route de Ferney, CH 1211 Geneva 20



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## THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN LUTHERAN CHURCHES ANALYSIS OF AN LWF SURVEY

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THIS INFORMATION IS BASED UPON ANSWERS RECEIVED  
IN 1980/1981 AND REFLECTS THE SITUATION IN THE  
CHURCHES THAT RETURNED THE QUESTIONNAIRE



## THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN LUTHERAN CHURCHES

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### Analysis of an LWF survey

#### ABOUT THE ISSUE

The LWF Department of Communication initiated this survey on the ordination of women in autumn 1980. All in all, 203 questionnaires were sent out (95 to LWF member churches and 108 to affiliated churches) and 126 answers received. Fifty-three churches were in favor of women's ordination, 64 were against, and 9 had taken no decision. There was a 73% response rate from member churches compared with a 44% response rate from affiliated churches.

The material provided by the survey was analyzed by a working group in Norway composed of Pastor Solveig Fiske, Professor Helge Faehn, Pastor Karl Gervin, Pastor Astri Hauge, Cand. philol. Synnøve Hilden, Pastor Ottar Myrseth, Lecturer Jan Schumacher, Pastor Lise Tostrup Setek, Pastor Atle Sommerfelt, and Bishop Per Juvkam. Fiske and Sommerfelt did the basic research, with Sommerfelt writing a first overview of the material. The draft manuscript was revised by members of the LWF Departments of Studies and Communication, and a conclusion was written by the LWF Women's Desk.

In systematizing and surveying the material available through the questionnaires, we do, of course, enter a controversial field. It is hard to describe the situation depicted in the answers in a way that everyone finds objective.

As a rule it is difficult to formulate questions in such an investigation in a neutral or objective way - or clearly enough to lead to precise answers. The people completing the questionnaire may also differ quite considerably. This means that the content and value of the responses may vary. It is also difficult to standardize the answers in such a way that it is possible to compare the responses. In some cases the questionnaires were not filled in, but information was given in written documents.

Many of the questions left the field open for different kinds of answers. This makes it especially difficult to systematize the replies because there are many possible answers.

Few of the questions have what could be termed "predetermined" alternatives for the answers. The questions with such alternatives suggested a range of possible answers, which meant that it was possible to develop more precise and balanced appraisements of the material. These predetermined alternatives could perhaps have been built into more questions, and the number of yes and no questions reduced. Questions that pave the way for yes/no answers somehow seem to lead to answers lacking in precision. It should also be pointed out that relatively few women seem to have filled in the questionnaire.

Those parts of the questionnaires that seemed most interesting were systematized in the form of tables. The most important of these have been included in the survey in order to facilitate an overview.



The churches are grouped into "yes" and "no" categories. In addition, there is a category for what has been termed "no decision" churches (see Tables 1, and 2, p. 3;) and 3 and 4, p. 5), churches that could not be included in any specific group because they have either not taken an independent decision or are in the process of taking one.

Section I deals with material from all the churches that received the questionnaire. In the following sections the survey is limited to churches that returned the questionnaire. Section II analyzes the answers of the "yes" churches, and Section III the answers of the "no" churches.

## I. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS TO ALL CHURCHES

A slight majority - 51% - of the Lutheran churches that returned the questionnaire do not ordain women. However, the churches that do ordain women account for 76% of all Lutheran Christians. Taking into consideration the differences between the continents and the size of the churches, the large Lutheran churches in Europe and North America form the nucleus of churches that permit the ordination of women.

### 1. Number of "yes" and "no" churches (See Table 1, p. 3)

The questionnaire was sent to 203 churches: 61 in Europe, 29 in Africa, 40 in Asia, 4 in Australasia, 50 in Latin America, and 19 in North America. A total of 77 churches (38%) did not respond. By far the highest proportion of answers came from Europe and Australasia: All four Australasian churches and 80% of the European churches answered. At the other end of the scale is Latin America with a response rate of only 38%, i.e., 19 out of 50 churches. The response rate from Asia was also rather low at 55%.

The churches were asked: "Does your church ordain women to the ministry?" The percentage of answers was 62%. Fifty-three (26%) replied in the affirmative. (Five out of 53 "yes" churches do not have female pastors and six have no female theological students). Sixty-four churches (32%) answered no. Nine churches (4%) had taken no decision.

The bulk (72%) of the "yes" churches are European, with 62% of the churches on that continent ordaining women. Australasia has the highest percentage of "no" churches (all four), but the largest group of "no" churches is to be found in Asia and Africa, where 32 of the 42 churches do not ordain women. In Africa this accounts for 55% of the churches; in Asia for 40%. The "yes" percentage in Africa is 7% and in Asia 15%.

### 2. Membership figures of "yes" and "no" churches (See Table 2, p. 3)

The table shows that 75.5% or about 56 million Lutherans are members of churches that have female pastors. Around 16.3% (12.2 million) belong to churches where women cannot function as pastors. The membership of the no-decision churches is about 25,000, and churches that have not returned the questionnaire have 6.1 million members. It was estimated that the membership figures in the Lutheran churches of the world amount to 74,451,667. A

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF "YES" AND "NO" CHURCHES

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
YES	2 7%	6 15%	0 0%	38 62%	3 6%	4 21%	53 26%
NO	16 55%	16 40%	4 100%	11 18%	9 18%	8 42%	64 32%
NO DECISION	2 7%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	7 14%	0 0%	9 4%
NO ANSWER	9 31%	18 45%	0 0%	12 20%	31 62%	7 37%	77 38%
TOTAL	29 100%	40 100%	4 100%	61 100%	50 100%	19 100%	203 100%
% ANSWERS	20 69%	22 55%	4 100%	49 80%	19 38%	12 64%	126 62%

TABLE 2: MEMBERSHIP FIGURES OF "YES" AND "NO" CHURCHES

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
YES	237,767 7.4%	1,848,605 58.7%	- -	48,478,410 84.4%	2,856 0.2%	5,602,891 63.7%	56,170,529 75.5%
NO	2,325,976 72.9%	702,129 22.3%	725,058 100%	5,038,800 8.8%	208,250 18.1%	3,158,390 35.9%	12,158,603 16.3%
NO DECISION	13,000 0.4%	- -	- -	- -	11,900 1.0%	- -	24,900 0.0%
NO ANSWER	611,564 19.3%	595,990 18.8%	- -	3,930,039 6.8%	929,918 80.7%	31,134 0.4%	6,098,645 8.2%
TOTAL	3,188,307 100%	3,146,724 100%	725,058 100%	57,447,249 100%	1,151,924 100%	8,792,415 100%	74,451,677 100%



comparatively high percentage of smaller churches have not answered the questionnaire (cf. also Conclusion).

The largest Lutheran churches that do not ordain women are the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Finland and Tanzania and the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in the USA.

When we look at the "yes" and "no" churches from the point of view of membership, the differences between the continents are again considerable.

In Europe a total of 84.4%, or more than 48 million members, live in churches that agree to the ordination of women. In North America a clear majority (63.7%) live in "yes" churches. In addition to Australasia (where all four churches do not ordain women), Africa has the highest percentage of members in "no" churches: 72.9%.

It is important to look at not only the number of churches but also the membership figures of these churches. This is particularly evident in Asia, where the figure is 15% "yes" as far as the number of churches is concerned, but 58.7% from the point of view of members. This means that it is the small churches in Asia that say no, and that they make up a numeric majority.

Although the percentage of answers may seem fairly low when we look at the number of churches that have replied, these churches do constitute the largest Lutheran churches and represent a clear majority of Lutheran Christians - a total of 91.7%. This goes to support the representativeness of the survey.

### 3. Overview of the churches that answered

Number of churches (see Table 3, p. 5): An analysis of the number of churches that answered the questionnaire indicates that 42% answered yes and ordain women; 51% answered no; and 7% are classified as "no decision".

A total of 126 churches returned the questionnaire. In Europe there are 78% "yes" churches, in Africa 10%, and in North America 33%. Europe is consequently the only continent with a majority of "yes" churches. Among the "no" churches, Australasia still has the highest percentage (all four churches). The majority of "no" churches are to be found in Africa and Asia, i.e., 16 on each continent (respectively, 80% and 73%).

Membership (see Table 4, p. 5): A classification of the membership figures shows that 82% of Lutherans (56 million) live in churches where women are ordained. Only 18% of Lutheran Christians belong to churches that do not ordain women. Nearly 91% (12 million) of the members from Europe belong to "yes" churches. On the other hand, we find 90% are members of "no" churches in both Latin America and Africa. The no decision group consists of only 7% of the members of churches that returned the questionnaire.

### 4. Position of person who completed the questionnaire

The material shows that 60% of the respondents have a leading position in the church (bishop, superintendent, or the only pastor). This could indi-

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF CHURCHES THAT ANSWERED

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
YES	2 10%	6 27%	0 0%	38 78%	3 16%	4 33%	53 42%
NO	16 80%	16 73%	4 100%	11 22%	9 47%	8 67%	64 51%
NO DECISION	2 10%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	7 37%	0 0%	9 7%
TOTAL	20 100%	22 100%	4 100%	49 100%	19 100%	12 100%	126 100%

TABLE 4: MEMBERSHIP IN CHURCHES THAT ANSWERED

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
YES	237,767 9%	1,848,605 72%	- -	48,478,410 91%	2,856 1%	5,602,891 64%	56,170,529 82%
NO	2,235,976 90%	702,129 28%	725,058 100%	5,038,800 9%	208,200 93%	3,158,390 36%	12,068,553 18%
NO DECISION	13,000 1%	-	-	-	11,900 6%	-	24,900 ?
TOTAL	2,486,743 100%	2,550,734 100%	725,058 100%	53,517,210 100%	222,956 100%	8,761,281 100%	68,263,982 100%



cate that both the issue of women's ordination and the giving of information to the LWF has been given fairly high priority in the churches.

The questionnaire did not ask for the sex of the respondents, but it would seem there were very few women among them. This is mainly the case in the "no" churches, and could be a further indication that women have not yet entered the hierarchy of the churches.

## II. QUESTIONS TO CHURCHES THAT ORDAIN WOMEN

### 1. Introduction of women's ordination

The possibility to ordain women was first introduced in Europe (by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1920). Up until 1960, no Lutheran churches outside Europe had decided to follow suit. Asia and Africa started gradually in the 1960s, but the majority of churches outside Europe that ordain women began to do so in the 1970s.

By 1939, five Lutheran churches in Europe had decided to ordain women. A number of ordinations took place in German churches just after the Second World War. This was due to the lack of pastors at that time, and also because women had often worked as pastors during the war while male pastors were on military service. Ordination figures of female pastors continued to rise throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. At the beginning of the 1970s, 70% of the "yes" churches in Europe had decided to ordain women. Since a total of 72% of all "yes" churches are in Europe, it is largely the tendencies of the European churches that will be reflected here.

This section deals only with the time when the decision to ordain women was taken. We do not know when the first ordination actually took place in the individual churches. Neither do we know whether many or few women were ordained soon after the decision was taken. In the case of Norway, 23 years elapsed from the time the decision was made until the first woman was ordained in 1961.

It is not surprising that in the large majority of the churches (87%) it was the top executive body that took the decision to ordain women. In addition to the top executive body, pastors' unions decided in two cases, and parliament in three countries. There was no answer from four churches on this question.

### 2. How was the issue of women's ordination raised? (See Table 5, p. 9)

Six alternatives were given to this question, thus making it possible to systematize the answers.

The most important factor that gave rise to discussion of the issue seems to have been that the initiative was taken by the church bodies themselves (41%). General political or social developments do not seem to have been the direct cause of a debate. The high number of churches (30%) where there are female theologians may denote that new education possibilities for women was the most important social condition that caused the question to be raised. The category "needs of the churches" covers answers such as "lack of pastors after the Second World War", etc.



a) Was the issue discussed?

The "yes" churches were asked whether a debate had preceded the decision - either on the parish level or in the church as a whole. More than 20% of the "yes" churches have not answered this question.

Of the rest, 29 churches say that they have discussed the issue, nine replied that it was not debated, and three said there was a limited debate. Certain regional differences exist. Even though the percentage that did not answer is rather high, it is worth noticing that just over half of the churches that answered say there was a discussion beforehand. One reason for this could be that the formulation of question 5 led respondents to think of some form of organized debate.

b) Length of the discussion

Around 13% of the churches discussed the issue for from one to five years, 13% for more than five years, and around 11% for up to one year. Figures for the various continents are scarce, but it looks as though Europe had longer discussions than other continents.

c) Nature of the discussion

The answers were divided into the following major categories: pastors' unions, parishes, conferences, church bureaucracy, church opinion, not specified, and not answered. Some churches offered answers that fit into more than one of these categories, and the total percentage therefore exceeds 100.

As many as 45% of the churches did not answer this question. However, the percentage of answers from churches that have discussed the issue is satisfactory. The distribution of replies shows that church opinion and pastors' unions have been the main forums of debate (23% of the churches reply that the discussions took place here). It should, however, be emphasized that it is not certain that debates held elsewhere are included in the answer. The parishes, too, have been rather active - 18% of the churches say that there was discussion on the parish level. In 11% of the churches the church bureaucracy was said to be active. Conferences and consultations seem to have played a fairly small role in the introduction of women's ordination, only two of the churches answering that this means of discussion was employed.

d) Preparation of the discussion and decision

Although the context here is first and foremost the formalized debate, many churches answered with two alternatives. As a result we get a total of more than 100%.

Only 26% of the respondents answered this question - far less than with the previous questions. One church does not know who prepared the discussion, the reason being that the decision was taken so long ago. It is important to note that the churches have different structures, and because of the diversity of structures and types of decisions, it is difficult to generalize on the basis of the available material.



The discussions were prepared by the church administration in 36% of the churches, by pastors or bishops in 26%, and by a special committee in 17%. In only two churches in Europe were state bodies active at this stage of the debate.

Outside Europe, no state bodies were involved in the decision making, and it looks as if the North Americans attached more importance to committee work and discussion in the church bureaucracy than the others.

As mentioned, only 11% of the churches said the church bureaucracy was involved in the debate. In the formal process leading to decision, however, it is now said to have been active in 36% of the churches. This and corresponding information reflects the church organizations. That only 17% of the churches have had a separate committee working seems to be somewhat surprising. On the other hand, it is conceivable that when the answers indicate that the preparation was done by the church bureaucracy, a certain amount of committee work was also included.

#### e) Form of the preparatory work

No predetermined alternatives for the answers were indicated on the questionnaires, and we have systematized the answers under the following categories: discussions, committees, pastoral letters from bishops, material from sister churches, proposed bills, church bureaucracy, and not answered.

In keeping with the whole tendency, the number of answers to this question is low, with 38% of the "yes" churches not responding to the question. Also in line with the other points in this section, it is clear that 30% of the churches had some sort of introductory material in the form of a proposal from the church administration. In 25% of the churches a more general discussion took place in connection with the preparatory work. Pastoral letters and material from sister churches have played an even lesser role; only two churches say that this had any importance in working out preparatory material.

There is very little difference between the continents. As can be expected, the type of preparatory work reflects the general decision-making process in the churches. Since, as noted above, the decision to ordain women was taken in the top executive bodies and the preparations were largely carried out by the church bureaucracy, it is not surprising that as many as 30% of the churches answer that the form of the preliminary work was aimed at this bureaucratic process.

The general discussion of the issue scores high. In a quarter of the churches this played a role in the preparatory work. The bishops may not have been very active - only three of the churches say that the preliminary action took the form of a pastoral letter.

With so many churches replying that there was no discussion on the issue prior to the introduction of the reform, it was to be expected that the number of answers on the nature of the discussion would be low. This "no" is reflected throughout. We may draw two conclusions: First, the discussion around the introduction of the ordination of women engaged both the top bodies of the churches, the parish level, and church opinion in general; second, the decision was frequently taken in the top body of the churches.



TABLE 5: HOW WAS THE ISSUE OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION RAISED?

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
Existence of female theologians	1	2	-	11	1	1	16
Needs of the churches	-	1	-	8	-	-	9
Political and/ or social groups and conditions	-	-	-	4	-	1	5
Church bodies and debate	1	2	-	15	1	3	22
Women's organi- zations in the church	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
No answer	-	1	-	9	1	-	11
TOTAL	2	8	-	47	3	5	65

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF FEMALE PASTORS

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
FEMALE PASTORS	2	4	-	1,835	-	74	1,915
TOTAL PASTORS	49	237	-	23,871	-	6,178	30,335

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF FEMALE THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
Female theological students	1	9	-	2,741	-	485	3,236
Theological students	14	70	-	9,148	-	2,068	11,300

TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

	Africa		Asia		Austr.		Europe		Latin America		North America		Total	
	*YC	%	YC	%	YC	%	YC	%	YC	%	YC	%	YC	%
0	1	50	2	33	-	-	3	8	-	-	-	-	6	12
0.1 - 9.9%	1	50	2	33	-	-	1	22	-	-	1	25	5	10
10.0-19.9%	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	11	-	-	1	25	5	10
20.0-29.9%	-	-	1	17	-	-	8	21	-	-	1	25	10	19
30.0-39.9%	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	26	-	-	1	25	11	21
40.0 up	-	-	1	17	-	-	6	16	-	-	-	-	7	13
No answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	16	3	100	-	-	9	15
TOTAL	2	100	6	100	-	-	38	100	3	100	4	100	53	100

(\*Number of "yes" churches)

TABLE 9: MINISTRY OF FEMALE PASTORS

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
Parish pastor	4	2	-	1131	-	189	1326
Social ministry	-	2	-	16	-	4	22
Chaplaincy	1	1	-	120	-	18	140
Women's work	1	-	-	26	-	-	27
Education	-	-	-	88	-	3	91
Administration	-	-	-	13	-	4	17
Other	-	-	-	121	-	19	140
No answer	-	-	-	5	3	-	8
TOTAL	6	5	-	1,520	3	237	1,771



This caused the discussion, at least to a certain extent, to take the form of a preparation for formal amendments to the church constitutions and contributed toward centralizing the final stages of the decision process and making it more bureaucratic.

### 3. Conditions and restrictions concerning the ordination of women

a) Was the decision on the ordination of women taken without condition?

Yes	33	62%
No	12	23%
No answer	8	15%
Total	53	100%

The answers specify the conditions in five churches as follows:

Depending on local acceptance	2
Celibacy	2
Not in leading parish position	1

b) Will the conditions be removed?

The churches may have found question 11 unclear compared to the previous questions and the following question. It must also have been difficult to give an answer as to whether the decision was likely to be reversed.

c) Are women ordained to full ministry?

Yes	48	90%
No	2	4%
No answer	3	6%

d) Does the constitution include special regulations in connection with the ordination of women?

Yes	2	4%
No	40	75%
No answer	11	21%
Total	53	100%

e) Is the ordination subject to restrictions?

No answer	42%
No restrictions	47%
Restrictions	11%
Total	100%

Six churches replied that there are certain clauses concerning ordination of women. These are:

Celibacy	1
Bishop can reject	3
Special objections	3

One church requires that the spouse is a member of the church. Another does not ordain to full ministry. A third stresses that the decision depends on the call of the congregation.

Reasons for restrictions: Only 6 churches answered the question. Three of these gave a positive reply to the preceding question 15.

#### 4. Female pastors in the churches

In this section we chart how the churches replied to the question about the ministry of women in the churches. We are faced with fairly bare statistical information about the number of female pastors, theologically-trained women, and what kinds of ministry the ordained women actually carry out.

##### a) Percentage of female pastors

(See Table 6, p. 9)

Six percent of the ordained pastors in Lutheran churches who answered the questionnaire are women: 1,915 out of 30,335. Europe clearly has the highest percentage (8%), whereas Africa has 4%, Asia 2%, and North America 1%. According to the questionnaire, in Latin America there are ordained women in Lutheran churches, but the percentage of answers from the Latin American countries is somewhat low.

None of the "yes" churches have more than 20% female pastors, but in just below one-fifth the percentage is between 10% and 20%. On the other hand, 9% of the "yes" churches in practice have no female pastors. The percentage of female pastors in the majority of the churches (58.5%) falls between 0.1% and 9.9%.

Although in many churches women have been ordained to the ministry for many years, they do not account for a large proportion of the total number of ministers. The main reason for this is that women's ordination was not introduced in most of the churches until the 1960s.

It could be that these low figures (see Table 7, p. 9) reflect a resistance, also in the large Lutheran "yes" churches, about the ordination of women. The consequences may be a lack of encouragement for women to enter ordained ministry. Other important factors may be that the pastoral role is often defined as a traditional male role and one that leaves little time for a woman to devote to her family responsibilities.

##### b) Percentage of female theological students

(See Tables 7 - p. 9; Table 8 - p. 10; and Table 1 - p. 3)

According to the questionnaire, 29% of the theological students are women from Lutheran churches that ordain women. There are 11,300 students in all, of whom 3,236 are women.

The distribution by continent shows the same tendency as noted earlier with the exception that North America is considerably closer to Europe than in the case of the number of pastors. Of the theological students in the European "yes" churches, almost 30% are women; nearly 24% in North America. The questionnaires do not indicate any female theological students in Latin America, only one out of 14 in Africa, and nine out of 70 in Asia.

Compared with Table 6, we see that the number of female theological students is higher than the number of female pastors.

In 13% of the churches, the percentage of female theological students amounts to more than 40%. On the other hand, 12% of the "yes" churches have no female theological students at all.



This increase in female students is considerable when compared to the number of female pastors (see Tables 6 and 7 for total numbers). It could mean that in a few years' time the percentage of female pastors in Lutheran churches will be higher than it is today. But, since we do not know how frequently women are/were ordained in the different churches, it is difficult to say to what extent.

As mentioned earlier, we lack material to make any conclusions about the increase in the number of ordained women compared to the percentage of female theological students.

The North Atlantic continents - North America and Europe - have the highest percentage of female theological students. This is particularly conspicuous in North America because the percentage of female pastors there is lower than in Asia, whereas the percentage of female theological students is considerably higher.

### c) Ministry of female pastors

(See Table 9, p. 10)

The churches were asked what kind of ministry the ordained female pastors are carrying out in the churches. Most of the "yes" churches answered (85%), but the figures say little about the specific female occupations since we have no corresponding material for male theologians.

In the "yes" churches 1,771 women are employed as pastors. If we compare this with the number of female pastors in Table 6, we see that this covers about 92% of the figures given for female pastors. This could mean that there are a few registered pastors who are not full-time employees.

The tendency is roughly the same on all continents. A great many female pastors do ordinary parish work. The material does not suggest any specific ministry for ordained women, except perhaps that special ministries like student, prison, and hospital ministry are somewhat overrepresented. But the main tendency is that the ordained female pastor is a parish pastor.

All churches probably have some kind of hierarchy of pastors. However, the questionnaires deal only with different types of ministries for female pastors, not with their position within the hierarchy. It would have been interesting to see whether there is a tendency for women to choose or be given more subordinate positions. The low percentage of women working in administration (0.9%) compared with the high proportion in parish work may suggest a lower position in the hierarchy.

Is it possible for clergy couples to share a joint ministry?

Yes	27	51%
No	9	17%
Experiment	3	6%
No answer	14	26%
Total	53	100%

Is the ordination of women generally accepted?

Yes	41	77%
No	5	10%
No answer	7	13%
Total	53	100%

Is the ordination of women questioned from time to time?

Yes	19	36%
No	21	40%
No answer	13	24%
Total	53	100%

These replies show that ordination of women is generally accepted but that certain groups continue to resist in many churches.

### III. QUESTIONS TO CHURCHES THAT DO NOT ORDAIN WOMEN

#### 1. Decision against the ordination of women?

(See Table 10, p. 15)

The churches that do not ordain women (a total of 64, see Tables 1 and 3) were asked whether this practice is based on an official decision.

Only one church did not respond to this question. The answers show that 70% of the churches have not taken an official decision. The percentage of answers was very high. Two churches in Latin America follow the standpoint of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. Of the "no" churches, 25% have taken an independent official decision.

There are considerable differences between the continents. As we saw under point I, most of the "no" churches are in Africa, Asia, Australasia, and North America. As many as 81% of the "no" churches in Africa and 88% of the "no" churches in Asia have not taken an official standpoint against the ordination of women. The corresponding figure for Latin America is 66%. It is worth noting that 55% of the European "no" churches have taken no official decision. Not typical, on the other hand, are the churches in North America, where 62% of the churches have made official decisions.

These figures are worth considering, both because the percentage of answers was high and because of the absence of official decisions in a clear majority of cases. This could mean that most churches have not discussed the question in detail which, in turn, may indicate that the question is not current in their cultural and social context, or that the churches have a theological understanding that excludes the ordination of women.

#### a) When was the decision taken?

The material here is fairly limited. Only in North America were decisions against the ordination of women taken before or around 1950. All the European "no" churches and the few churches in Africa and Asia that answered this question took their decision in the 1970s. The Australasian churches made their decision in the 1960s.

Eleven of the 16 churches that indicated a date for this decision took it in the 1970s, and this accounts for almost 50% of the European "no" churches. A reason why so many other churches also decided at this time could be that young churches made a decision when the church was founded or became independent.



TABLE 10: HAVE THE CHURCHES OFFICIALLY TAKEN A STANDPOINT  
AGAINST THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN?

	Africa		Asia		Austr.		Europe		Latin America		North America		Total	
	*C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%
YES	3	19	1	6	1	25	5	45	1	11	5	62	16	25
NO	13	81	14	88	3	75	6	55	6	67	3	38	45	70
Missionary organi- zations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	22	-	-	2	3
No answer	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
TOTAL	16	100	16	100	4	100	11	100	9	100	8	100	64	100

(\*Number of churches)

TABLE 11: REASONS FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER REJECTION OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
Theological reservations	10	4	2	7	7	7	37
Cultural and so- cial reasons	8	9	1	2	2	-	22
Lack of need or interest	6	7	-	2	3	1	19
Lack of suitable candidates	1	3	-	-	3	1	8
Parishes too small	2	-	-	1	-	-	3
Women have other possibi- lities for work	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Standpoint of mother church	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total answers	28	23	3	13	15	9	91
<hr/>							
Number of chur- ches that have replied	14	11	3	8	8	7	51
Churches that did not reply	2	5	1	3	1	1	13
Total number of churches	16	16	4	11	9	8	64

## b) Will there be a fresh discussion?

It is worth noting that the churches may have found it difficult to answer this type of question if no official decision was taken.

A comparatively high number of churches did not answer this question (16%). Half of the "no" churches answered negatively: 45% with an absolute "no", 5% with "hardly". On the other hand, 28% of the churches answered yes, and 6% said that it was possible.

Here again, there are fairly clear regional differences. The North American churches say the issue will not be discussed again, and over 60% of the European churches do not think a discussion will recur. Churches in Africa are divided equally between those who consider discussing the issue again and those who do not. In Asia the majority of the churches want to raise the question again, and the same applies to the four Australasian churches.

Is a committee working on preparatory documents?

Yes	6
No	35
No answer	23
Total	64

Is a positive decision foreseen?

Yes	3
No	7
Uncertain	6
No answer	48
Total	64

If a positive reply was given to the above question, is admission to full ministry expected?

All three "yes" churches this applies to, answered in the affirmative.

Is a limited admission expected?

Somehow this question did not give rise to meaningful answers. It seems that those who said no positive decision was foreseen replied yes here (three churches in all).

What limitations are conceivable?

This question stands together with the three preceding ones. There are four answers in all: the office of the bishop is possibly out of reach; full-time employment of women without ordination is a possibility, as are more indirect pastoral tasks in connection with teaching; and finally, there is possibly a limitation to diaconic work.

## 2. Reasons for the rejection of female pastors

(See Table 11, p. 15)

Clear regional differences appear:

The North American churches give theological reservations as the reason. None of the churches listed social or cultural reasons, the only continent where this is the case.



The same tendency can be noted in Europe, with 7 out of 13 churches indicating theological reservations. However, two also point to cultural and social reasons, and two to "lack of interest."

In Africa, over two-thirds of the churches list theological reservations as the main reason, but half of them also indicate cultural and social causes, and many refer to lack of need or interest.

In Asia, 56% of the churches refer to cultural and social reasons and 44% list "lack of need or interest." These two factors may be fairly closely related. In addition, 25% indicate theological reservations.

From Africa, Asia, and Latin America there are more answers per church than from Europe and North America. While the theological argumentation plays an important role for these churches while dealing with this issue, it is equally clear that cultural and social factors are also very important.

It is worthwhile comparing this overview with the section dealing with how the question was raised in churches that ordain women (p. 6). There it was found that the main reason for the acceptance of women's ordination was that church bodies had raised the question for debate and that there were female theologians. It was also noted that the reform must be seen in connection with the better possibilities for education and professional careers for women in western society after the Second World War and especially in the 1960s and 1970s.

This corresponds quite well with the information given above, namely that the "lack of need or interest" is an important reason for the churches to reject reform. If we connect this with the fact that 43% of the churches indicate cultural and social causes, much points to the conclusion that the general situation of women in society has more impact on the churches' decision regarding the ministry of women than theological work. It would be correct to conclude that the answers of the "yes" and "no" churches relate to one another and show there are both theological and sociological reasons for the respective standpoints. The material does not make it possible to specify different forms of theological or social reservations, for instance which scriptural passages and what other theological arguments were of importance for the "no" standpoint.

### 3. Factors that could contribute to a change in attitude

(See Table 12, p. 18)

This question could be held to imply that the ordination of women is a question of development and of finding the best arguments supporting the reform, which would contradict the theological understanding in some "no" churches. This question was not answered by 36% of the churches, mainly those in Europe, Asia, and Australasia.

There is a considerable difference between the continents. In North America seven out of 10 churches indicated they would need a more convincing theological argument. Petitions from special groups within the church and the presence of theologically-trained women were indicated by two out of eight churches.

TABLE 12: WHAT FACTORS COULD CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CHANGING  
THE ATTITUDE IN THE "NO" CHURCHES

	Africa	Asia	Austr.	Europe	Latin America	North America	Total
Positive decision:							
- in other Lutheran churches of the world	4	4	-	1	1	-	10
- in Lutheran churches in the same region	4	2	-	1	2	-	9
- in non-Lutheran churches in the region	2	2	-	-	-	-	4
Presence of theologically trained women	4	5	-	2	3	1	15
Lack of male theologians	3	4	1	2	2	-	12
Petitions from groups in one's own church	8	6	-	3	2	1	20
More convincing theological argumentation	4	3	1	2	3	7	20
Social-ethical argumentation	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Changes in social conditions	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Approval of mother church	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
None	1	-	-	1	-	1	3
Total answers	31	26	2	13	14	10	96
Number of churches that answered	12	9	2	6	6	6	41
Churches that did not answer	4	7	2	5	3	2	23
Total number of churches	16	16	4	11	9	8	64



In Africa and Asia, petitions from special groups within one's own church are most frequently mentioned. Eight out of 16 African churches and six out of 16 Asian churches mention this. In Europe, three out of 11 have pointed to this possibility.

The lack of male theologians (which, as we have seen, played a role in the German church after the Second World War) was not a decisive factor on any continent. Asia is top here with four answers, whereas only two churches in Europe and Latin America mention this factor.

There is a noticeable difference between the continents as to the importance given to a positive decision in other Lutheran churches. In North America none of the churches list this as a factor, and in Europe only one within two of the three alternatives (factors 1-3 on the table). In Africa and Asia, on the other hand, four churches on each of the continents think that a positive decision in other Lutheran churches would be of importance. They would also appreciate positive standpoints from both Lutheran and non-Lutheran churches in their region.

The figures derived from the questionnaire reveal that theological arguments also play an important role when it comes to changing the attitudes of the churches. But, as we have seen, social and cultural factors are also in the foreground. This concerns both "presence of theologically-trained women", "lack of male theologians", and "petitions from special groups in one's own church", and is in accordance with what we found earlier about how the question of women's ordination was raised (p. 6). In that case the debate within the church and the existence of female theologians played a major part in most of the churches.

The material shows that one of the main reasons why many churches refuse to ordain women is that it is neither a current theological nor a current social issue. Many churches say that a petition from special groups within the church and the existence of theologically-trained women could contribute toward raising the issue again. This means that the question would be raised within the church itself and that this would give the debate an indigenous setting.

#### 4. Theologically-trained women in "no" churches

##### a) Number of women graduated in theology

Forty-two churches answered this question, giving the following continental distribution of woman graduates in theology:

Africa	18
Asia	42
Australasia	1
Europe (ELCF: 1,250)	1,270
Latin America	2
North America	-
Total	1,333

The material does not give corresponding information on male theologians. One of the the European "no" churches alone has 1,250 female theologians: the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Taking this into consideration,

the regional differences between the rest of Europe and Asia and Africa are no longer so great. Australasia with one, Latin America with two, and North America with no theologically-trained women in the "no" churches constitute another group.

There is probably reason to stress the connection with what was said in the section dealing with the factors contributing to a change of attitude: There are few theologically-trained women in the "no" churches, but a rise in the number could contribute toward a change of attitude. On this basis it is possible to conclude that the reason so many churches have not ordained women is that there is, in fact, a lack of female theologians.

#### b) Number of female theological students

Africa	20
Asia	35
Australasia	6
Europe ((ELCF: 585)	590
Latin America	16
North America	2
Total	669

The "no" churches were asked for the number of female theological students, not the total number of theological students. A high percentage did not answer this question (36%).

The reflection concerning the number of woman graduates in theology (p. 12) is also valid here. But it is interesting to note that the increase in the number of students compared with the number of pastors of the "yes" churches is not evident in the "no" churches. The time factor is of importance here - the material does not say how long women have had access to theological studies in the respective churches. But the attitude of the churches toward ordination may have had an impact, too.

#### c) Number of theologically-trained women in full-time employment

Africa	12
Asia	20
Australasia	1
Europe (ELCF: 275)	290
Latin America	2
North America	-
Total	325

The figure for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland does not include female theologians who work full-time with Christian organizations, in missionary work abroad, or as teachers of religion in high schools and colleges. If Finland is kept out, the variation between the continents is not so great. In Asia, too, one of the churches accounts for the bulk of the full-time female theologians: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hong Kong - 15 out of 20. Otherwise the figures are low. Of the "no" churches that returned the questionnaire, only North America does not have any full-time female theologians.



The figures show a clear decline in comparison with the number of fully trained female theologians, but they would be considerably changed if the women working in theological professions outside the organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland were taken into consideration.

**d) What service is performed by theologically-trained women?**  
(See Table 13, p. 22)

As many as 76% of the churches did not answer this question. The number of answers must, however, be seen in connection with answers to question 38 (on the number of theologically-trained women working in the church).

The questions do not pick up information about the extent to which female theologians have part-time work, and special work with or without salary. The material therefore does not allow for conclusions about the total ministry of women in the church or special ministries for women.

Not surprisingly, teaching is the alternative indicated by the churches for the female theologians.

**e) What ministries are theologically trained women allowed to perform?**

Sixty-three percent of the churches did not reply. There were no predetermined alternatives for the answers. Eleven out of 24 churches say that teaching is a possibility, seven say that women can perform ministry as not-ordained, and six that they may preach.

Do women have access to theological studies?

Yes	45 churches
No	5 churches
No answer	14 churches
Total	64 churches

How many theologically trained women are not regularly employed in the church?

Only 17 churches answered this question. The numbers vary from zero to three. Interesting is the large number of theologically-trained women not employed full-time in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (10).

What prevents full-time employment?

Ten churches answered. The most important reason is marriage and home duties (5), whereas four point to lack of work, one to continued studies, and one to practical reasons of a general nature.

## 5. Summary

A "no" to female pastors does not imply explicit rejection of possibilities for women in ministry. There are openings for work in the church, for studying theology, and for full-time employment. This goes together with another and quite clear tendency: that, in most "no" churches, women as theologians play less conspicuous roles than in churches that ordain women.

TABLE 13: TYPES OF MINISTRIES

What ministries are carried out  
by women in the church?

What tasks may  
women perform?

Theological work	-	1
Education	6	11
Children/youth	4	2
Leadership training	4	1
Diaconic work	4	3
Preaching	1	6
Women's work	3	4
Special ministry	2	3
Counseling	1	1
Organizations	1	2
Ministry as not ordained	1	7
Not specified	-	2
Total answers	28	43

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Churches that answered	15	24
Churches that didn't answer	49	40
Total number of churches	64	64



## IV. CONCLUSION

### 1. Complementary information

The response of LWF member and affiliated churches to this survey is 62%. Although this may seem a relatively low figure from which to draw conclusions about the issue of women's ordination in LWF churches, it must be remembered that 73% of the LWF member churches replied. The response is high in comparison with similar LWF surveys.

The results of a survey on women's ordination carried out by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) was published in 1980. Here, 127 questionnaires were sent out and 121 responses returned, a response rate of 95%. Seventy-five churches were in favor of women's ordination and 42 were not. Church denominations that are members of CEC include Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Orthodox, Presbyterian, United Reformed, and Waldensian.

Some LWF member churches and affiliated churches with high membership figures did not return the questionnaire (representing 7% of Lutherans worldwide). After the survey was completed, letters were sent out to these churches in order to ascertain their standpoint. Out of the seven member churches, five replied, and only the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa said it ordained women. They have two ordained women pastors, both of whom were ordained in 1982. In India, the Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church has taken no decision on this question; the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church is not in favor of women's ordination; and the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church has taken no decision on the issue and has no ordained women at present.

The two larger affiliated churches - the La Plata Evangelical Church in Argentina and the Evangelical Church in Baden - are both in favor of women's ordination. The La Plata church made it possible for women to enter the ordained ministry in 1974, but has, as yet, no female pastors, only theological students. The Evangelical Church in Baden has ordained women since 1972, and has at present 41 female pastors.

Two points should be kept in mind concerning this survey: namely that statistical figures in the survey do not necessarily reflect the actual situation experienced by female pastors in those churches that ordain women. Furthermore, it must be pointed out that the survey has not discussed whether or not the statistical information should have theological implications for the churches, and it is thus difficult to foresee what will happen in the churches in the future.

### 2. How to continue - some reflections

The results of the survey give a rather disparate picture of how the Lutheran churches relate to the question of the ordination of women. In many churches, the matter is of great importance and is the object of lively debate; in others, the issue has not yet become the focus of attention. Some churches have said yes to the ordination of women and some have said no. Within some churches opinion is divided.



The ordination of women must be seen as part of the overall question of the position of women in the church. In most churches, women are found to an overwhelmingly large degree on the so-called grass-root level, but very rarely among the church leadership. The reasons why the churches do not include women on all levels of leadership are based on different theological, cultural, social, and traditional views. These reasons must be clearly identified, studied, and discussed in the churches.

It might be interesting to investigate further than the material allows, i.e., to find out the composition of the church body that took the decision (the distribution of pastors, laity, women, men). This might enable us to see whether there is a tendency for pastor-dominated assemblies to go against the ordination of women to a larger extent than assemblies of lay people.

Some points could be particularly challenging for the future:

1. It was noted that the questionnaire was mainly answered by persons who had a high position in the church hierarchy. This implies that it was mainly men who completed the questionnaires.
2. It is very likely that the decision with regard to women's ordination was also taken mainly by male-dominated church bodies, since, as was pointed out earlier, there are few women in such church decision-making bodies. Since this is an issue which explicitly refers to women, women should be directly involved in the decision-making process, wherever the issue might be discussed.
3. A further step to be taken on the basis of this material would be to determine the total number of women theologians - students and fully trained theologians, ordained and not-ordained. The question is whether the low figure of women pastors is due to the fact that there are few women theologians or whether many of them do not wish to be ordained or have difficulties in obtaining ordination or work. Furthermore, in countries with a low percentage of female theologians, the figures should be compared with the percentage of women in other fields of study, in order to see if there are any important differences.
4. Another area of investigation would be with regard to the theological schools and seminaries in which future church leaders are being educated. Are the history and the role of women in the church included on the curricula? Are the libraries in these institutions properly equipped and are bibliographies available for students and faculties who want to do a more indepth study of issues related to women in the church? How many women are members of the faculty and in what capacity?
5. Why do women who are fully trained theologians decide not to become ordained ministers? Do the churches take seriously the criticisms against traditional church structures that might influence their decisions? As mentioned in the report, the traditional male role of the pastor is problematic and suits only certain types of people. New needs must be considered: the needs of modern parishes and changing societies, as well as the needs of people becoming pastors. For example, do pastors have the possibility to work on a part-time basis?



6. In many countries, employment conditions for women are not the same as those for men. Women are paid less for the same work and have fewer social benefits. In some churches, for example, women lose their jobs if they marry. This is an expression of a discriminating attitude toward women. A question for the churches to tackle is: Are the conditions of employment the same for men and for women? If not, there is an urgent need to start discussions on how to make work conditions for women equal to those for men.

7. Churches are part of their cultural contexts. In many countries, the churches have been the last to accept women in all kinds of positions and work. In other cultures, churches invoke cultural customs as a reason for not ordaining women. This poses the question regarding the role the church plays in society. Does it have a prophetic role to play, or does it merely reflect the context in which it lives?

8. Last, but not least, further theological studies are needed, especially in the area of the theology of creation with emphasis on anthropological aspects. In recent years, a number of theologians - mostly women - have been studying these issues. The World Council of Churches has conducted a study project on "The Community of Women and Men in the Church". There is a wealth of material and findings to be considered and incorporated into any further study on this topic in Lutheran churches.

The questionnaire expresses the need for study material on many of these questions. This material should be part of the follow-up to this study on the part of two the LWF, in order to inspire and stimulate the churches to work further on these questions.

## APPENDIX 1

## LIST OF YES CHURCHES

- =====
- 1) When was the decision taken to ordain women?
  - 2) Are there restrictions in the status of women pastors?
  - 3) How many women pastors are active now / out of total number of pastors?
  - 4) How many women are studying now / out of total theological students?

NAME OF CHURCH	1)	2)	3)	4)
<u>Europe</u>				
Church of Lippe	1970	NO	6/120	30/60
Church of Norway	1938	YES	42/1000	70/800
Church of Sweden	1958	YES	370/3340	-
Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine	1929	NO	14/185	49/136
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church	1967	NO	4/90	5/40
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Exile	?	NO	0/-	5/31
Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg	1953	NO	81/493	53/137
Evangelical Church in Hessen & Nassau		NO	118/1300	-
Evangelical Church in the Rhineland	1950	NO	129/1810	282/1121
Evangelical Church of Greifswald	1935	NO	13/198	13/32
Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck	1953	NO	53/658	110/328
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria	1965	NO	7/205	21/78
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, Yugoslavia	1977	NO	1/8	0/1
Evangelical Church of the Görlitz Region	1947	NO	6/7	2/13
Evangelical Church of the Palatinate (Protestant Church)	1958	NO	27/363	73/243
Evangelical Church of the Province of Saxony	1935	NO	142/836	57/139
Evangelical Church of Westphalia	1957	NO	84/1495	331/1166
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria	1975	NO	46/1900	219/923
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick	1968	NO	7/253	58/172
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark	1947	NO	220/1850	600/1200
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy	-	NO	0/-	-
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg	1945	YES	9/226	32/117
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the King- dom of the Netherlands	1920	NO	5/40	7/11
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thüringen	1968	NO	36/650	41/116
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg	1948/68	NO	103/1500	247/814
Evangelical Lutheran Church of France	1974	NO	2/45	5/11
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover	1964	NO	101/1776	285/920
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg	1972	NO	31/278	18/70



Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony	1970	NO	50/1104	59/236
Evangelical Reformed Church in Northwest Germany	1969	NO	5/110	35/100
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Exile	1970	NO	4/-	2/-
Lutheran Church in Hungary	1966	NO	10/300	16/48
Lutheran Church in Ireland	-	NO	-	-
National Church of Iceland	1974	NO	1/106	8/50
Northelbian Evangelical Lutheran Church	1966	NO	86/1314	-
Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the CSSR	1953	NO	3/20	0/1
Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the CSSR	1951	YES	27/265	10/35
Synodal Presbyterial Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Socialist Republic of Romania	1951	YES	2/33	none

Africa

Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA/Namibia	1974/75	NO	2/49	1/14
Moravian Church in Southern Africa	1976	NO	4/4	0/0

Asia

Batak Christian Community Church	1972	NO	1/16	2/3
Batak Protestant Christian Church-Angkola	1978	NO	1/17	-/6
Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia	1974	NO	15/-	2/21
Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church	1970	NO	1/134	4/19
Simalungun Protestant Christian Church	1969	NO	0/51	1/15
West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church	1978	YES	1/19	0/6

Latin America

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile	-	NO	0/-	-
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama	1980	NO	-	-
Protestant Society of the South-East, Argentina	-	NO	-	-

USA & Canada

American Lutheran Church	1970	NO	67/5522	188/968
Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches	1977/80	NO	5/357	77/200
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada	1976	NO	2/299	3/35
Lutheran Church in America	1970	NO	-	217/865

## APPENDIX 2

## LIST OF NO CHURCHES

=====

- 1) Official decision against ordination of women? When was it taken?
- 2) Does church intend to discuss issue soon? When?
- 3) Are reasons given for negative decision?
- 4) Are factors indicated which could encourage positive decision?

NAME OF CHURCH	1)	2)	3)	4)
<u>Europe</u>				
Association of Independent Evangelical Lutheran Churches in the German Democratic Republic	NO	NO	NO	NO
Confessional Lutheran Church of Finland	YES 1979	NO	YES	NO
Evangelical Church in Baden, FRG	NO	NO	YES	YES
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the People's Republic of Poland	NO	-	YES	NO
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the S.R.R (Romania)	YES 1978	YES 1982	YES	YES
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	YES 1976	YES 1982	YES	YES
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schaumburg-Lippe, FRG	NO	NO	YES	NO
Evangelical Lutheran Church - Synod of France and Belgium	NO	NO	YES	NO
Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway	YES 1877 +	NO	YES	YES
Free Association of Evangelical Lutheran Congregations in Finland	NO	NO	YES	YES
Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church, FRG	YES 1971 1979	NO	NO	NO
<u>Africa</u>				
Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	NO	Perhaps	YES	YES
Evangelical Church of Eritrea	NO	NO	YES	YES
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania	NO	YES 1982	YES	YES
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe	NO	NO	NO	NO
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon	NO	YES	YES	NO
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana	NO	NO	YES	YES
Evangelical Lutheran Community in Zaire East	NO	NO	YES	YES
Evangelical Lutheran Community in Zaire West	NO	YES	NO	YES
Evangelical Lutheran Owambokavango Church	NO	YES	YES	YES
Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa	NO	NO	YES	NO
German Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa	NO	-	YES	YES
Lutheran Church in Liberia	-	YES 1982	NO	YES
Lutheran Church of Central Africa	YES 1972	NO	YES	NO
Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria	YES 1973	YES	NO	YES



Lutheran Church of Nigeria	NO	-	YES	NO
Malagasy Lutheran Church	YES 1979	NO	YES	YES

Asia

Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church	?	-	YES	NO
Basel Christian Church of Malaysia	YES 1979	YES	YES	YES
China Evangelical Lutheran Church	NO	NO	NO	NO
Christian Center-Shalhevetyah, Israel	NO	NO	YES	NO
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madya Pradesh	NO	YES	NO	NO
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore	NO	YES	YES	NO
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong	NO	YES	YES	YES
Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chotanagpur and Assam, Ranchi	NO	YES 1981	NO	YES
Indonesia Christian Church	NO	NO	YES	YES
Japan Lutheran Church	NO	NO	NO	YES
Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church	NO	NO	YES	YES
Lutheran Church, Hong Kong Synod	NO	-	NO	NO
Lutheran Church in Korea	NO	NO	YES	YES
Lutheran Church in the Philippines	NO	YES	YES	YES
Lutheran Church (Israel)	NO	NO	YES	YES
Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church	NO	-	YES	NO

Australasia

Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG	NO	YES 1981	YES	YES
Gutnius Lutheran Church - Papua New Guinea	NO	YES	NO	NO
Lutheran Church of Australia	YES 1966	NO	YES	YES
Lutheran Church of New Zealand	NO	NO	YES	NO

Latin America

Conference of Lutheran churches in Venezuela	NO	NO	YES	YES
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Peru	YES 1968	NO	YES	NO
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil	YES	-	YES	YES
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia	NO	NO	YES	YES
Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Ecuador	NO	-	YES	YES
Lutheran Church in Guyana	NO	YES	YES	YES
Lutheran Salvadorian Synod (El Salvador)	NO	YES	YES	YES
Lutheran Synod of Mexico	YES	YES	YES	YES
United Evangelical Lutheran Church, Argentina	NO	YES 1981	NO	NO

USA & Canada

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations	YES 1971	NO	YES	NO
Church of the Lutheran Brethren, MN	YES 1900	NO	YES	YES
Church of the Lutheran Confession, WI	YES 1961	NO	YES	-
Concordia Lutheran Conference, OR	YES 1951	NO	YES	-
Conservative Lutheran Church / Central Lutheran Church, WA	NO	NO	YES	NO
International Lutheran Fellowship, ND	NO	NO	YES	YES
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod	YES 1971	NO	YES	NO
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod	NO	NO	YES	NO

## APPENDIX 3

## ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS SENT BY CHURCHES

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	YES/NO CHURCH	PAGES	DOCUMENTS
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EUROPE			
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Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine	YES	15	Minutes of Church Council Meetings from 1929, 1948, 1955
Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau	YES	3	Letter
Evangelical Church in the Rhineland	YES	4	Report on constitution change concerning women's ordination
Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the SSR	NO	1	Letter
Evangelical Lutheran Church; Italy	YES	1	Letter
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg	YES	16	Minutes from 1945, Constitution vol. 13, 14, 15, 16. Report.
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	NO		Reports, Presentations, etc;
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hannover	YES	15	Report of Church Council, report on women pastors, letter
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony	YES	8	Church Paper No. 8 & 21
Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway	NO	14	Handbook
Evangelical Reformed Church in Northwest Germany	YES	2	Constitution
Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church	NO	43	Constitution, 2 reports on women in ministry
Lutheran Church in Hungary	YES	2	Minutes of National Council of Lutheran Church & letter
Northelbian Evangelical Lutheran Church	YES	14	Letter, Constitution excerpts from 1945, 1966, 1968, 1970



## ASIA

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Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church	NO	1	Letter
Christian Protestant Church in Indonesia	YES	3	Report on "Die Frau und das Amt" by A. Lumbantobing
Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church	NO	1	Letter

## LATIN AMERICA

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile	YES	2	Letter
Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Ecuador	NO	1	Letter

## USA &amp; CANADA

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American Lutheran Church	YES	8	2 reports, paper on women & ministry in church and society
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations	NO	3	Excerpt of Annual Report 197 . Report "Bible and role of women."
Church of the Lutheran Confession	NO	12	Report "The Christian Woman"
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada	YES	17	Excerpt of Dr. Jacobson's report to 1974 Convention, report on ordination of women.
Lutheran Church in America	YES	3	Paper "Included" by C. Ackermann
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod	NO	2	Resolutions, 1971 Convention

## APPENDIX 4

## CHART OF MAIN EVENTS SINCE 1981

**Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus**

April 1981

Reference: LWI 14/81

Interview conducted on women's ordination. All interviewees except one said they could find no passage in the Bible that opposes women's ordination. Rev. Yadessa Daba said there is nothing that keeps women from being pastors. Issue is being considered.

**Church of Sweden**

May 1981

Reference: LWI 18/81

New law to be passed eliminating "conscience clause" which gave opponents to female ordination the right to refuse to work with female pastors. Now a recommendation has been submitted to the government to abolish this clause. All pastors should collaborate fully with each other regardless of sex of colleague.

**Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland**

June 1981

Reference: LWI 21/81

Proposal that female theologians employed by parishes be given the right to perform baptism and burial services. Proposal was sent to committee for deliberation. The question of female ordination is being further studied by the Bishops' Conference.

**United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Argentina)**

October 1981

Reference: LWI 40/81

By an overwhelming majority, the annual assembly of UELC has approved ordination of women into the the ministry, thus becoming the first LWF member church in Latin America to formally approve women for ordained ministry.

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa**

December 1981

Reference: ELCSA News

It was agreed that women who have completed their theological training at one of the Lutheran seminaries may be ordained.



**Church of Sweden**

March 1982

Reference: LWI 10/82

Church of Sweden appeals for peace with movement that opposes female ordination. Two independent dekanats exist which oppose, and three other dekanats plan to join them, thus forming a synod. The dekanats must either dissolve their groups or withdraw from the Church of Sweden.

**Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland**

June 1982

Reference: LWI 24/82

One third of Finnish theologians are female.

**Lutheran Church in America**

August 1982

Reference: LWI 29/82

LCA has sent two ordained female pastors to work as LCA missionaries overseas. LCA has ordained women since 1970. In 1972, it expressed its readiness to send ordained women missionaries to any part of the world where the local church accepts their status.

**Lutheran Church in Liberia**

December 1982

Reference: LWI 44/82

Lutheran Church in Liberia authorized the admission of women into the ministry. Delegates approved the recommendation by a 75 to 7 margin.

**Protestant Christian Batak Church in Indonesia**

December 1982

Reference: LWI 2/83

Protestant Christian Batak Church decided to allow women to preach and give benediction during church service. There is now no difference in PCBC between men and women in clergy.

## APPENDIX 5

THE QUESTIONNAIRE: QUESTIONS TO THE CHURCHES  
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## PART I: QUESTIONS TO CHURCHES WHICH ORDAIN WOMEN

1. When was it decided to ordain women to the ministry?
2. Which church body took this decision?
3. Breakdown of votes: for/against/abstentions
4. How/by whom was this question brought to your church's attention?
5. Was your church's decision preceded by a debate within the congregations and/or other groups?
6. If so, how long did it last and what form did it take?
7. Who did the preparatory work for the official discussion of your church on this subject?
8. What form did this preparatory work take?
9. Was the decision final or conditional?
10. If conditional, please specify conditions:
11. Have the conditions been removed, or are they likely to be removed?
12. Are women ordained to a full ministry?
13. If not, what tasks can an ordained women in your church not perform?
  - a) administer the sacraments
  - b) be the sole leader of a congregation
  - c) other tasks (please specify)
14. Are there special regulations for the ordination of women in your church's constitution/bylaws?
15. Is the decision limited by certain clauses, such as:
  - a) the need for an ordained woman to be unmarried?
  - b) the possibility for bishops/district presidents to refuse to ordain women and/or employ ordained women?
  - c) other (please specify)
16. What are the main factors (logical, cultural, societal, psychological, practical) which have contributed to this decision?



17. How many ordained women are serving in your church at the moment?  
out of a total of ... ordained pastors?
18. What kind of ministry do ordained women presently perform? (If possible,  
give figures for each category.)
  - a) parish pastor
  - b) specialized ministries: social services  
chaplaincy (students, prison, hospital, etc.)  
women's work  
Christian/theological education  
church administration  
other (please specify)
19. Are there arrangements for part-time or joint ministries for clergy  
couples?
20. How many women are presently studying theology? ... out of a total of  
... theological students.
21. Is the fact that your church has approved women's ordination now  
generally accepted?
22. Is the ordination of women still questioned in some quarters?

OTHER REMARKS:

## PART II: QUESTIONS TO CHURCHES WHICH DO NOT ORDAIN WOMEN

23. Has your church officially decided not to ordain women?
24. If so, when?
25. Breakdown of votes: for/against/abstentions
26. What was the main reason for this negative vote?
27. Does your church intend to discuss the question of women's ordination  
in the near future?
28. If so, when?
29. Is a committee presently working on preparatory documents?  
(If so, please enclose documents that are already available).
30. Do you expect a positive decision?
31. If so, will it be for a full ministry?
32. Or will there be some limitations?
33. Please specify the limitations (cf. questions 15).

34. If your church is not likely to accept the ordination of women in the foreseeable future, please state why. E.g.:
- a) lack of interest or needs
  - b) theological reservations
  - c) cultural/societal reasons
  - d) lack of potential candidates
  - e) other reasons (please specify)
35. What factors would encourage your church to reconsider its position or to start studying this question? E.g.:
- a) positive decisions by other Lutheran churches around the world
  - b) positive decisions by other Lutheran churches in your area
  - c) positive decisions by non-Lutheran churches in your area
  - d) the availability of theologically-trained women
  - e) an insufficient number of male pastors
  - f) requests from certain groups within your church
  - g) a more convincing theological rationale
  - h) other factors (please specify)
36. Is it possible for women to study theology?
37. If so, how many women in your church:
- a) have already graduated in theology?
  - b) are currently studying theology?
38. How many theological trained women (with a degree similar to that of male pastors) are working full time in your church?
39. What kind of ministries are they performing? (Please specify)
40. How many are not working full time in the church?
41. What is hindering them working full time in the church?
42. What tasks are theologically trained women allowed to perform?

OTHER REMARKS:





